The

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Notes of the Month.

The first Saturday of the present month will be the occasion of the Sunday School Conference at Holywood. This annual conference is now so strongly established in popular esteem that we confidently expect the usual large attendance. It is no slight undertaking for any congregation to entertain so large a number of visitors as is usually brought together, but we have every confidence that the Holywood people will be fully equal to the demand upon their organising powers. Granted a fine day, we are assured that the Rev. Mathew Watkins will have a large audience to listen to his paper on "The Sunday School Worker."

* *

Later in the month will be held the annual meetings of our chief Church organisations—the Remonstrant Synod, the Non-Subscribing Association, and the General Synod of our Non-Subscribing Church. They will be held respectively on Tuesday and Wednesday, June 20th and 21st, and will follow the usual order. But on this occasion there will be no Public Lecture, there being substituted in place of the latter a Public Meeting, with special addresses from three of our ministers—the Rev. J. J. Magill, Rev. E. H. Pickering, and Rev. H. J. Rossington. This meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 21st, at five o'clock, and will be preceded by tea, served in the Central Hall. It is hoped that all the meetings will be characterised by good attendances of both lay and ministerial friends.

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Our first note of last month, referring to the Belfast arrangements for celebrating the Shakespeare Tercentenary, was rendered nugatory by the fact that the Dublin revolt caused the postponement of the Tercentenary gatherings until the autumn. It was felt that, in view of the general anxiety, people were not in the mood for such concentration upon the historic past. What was more influential with the Tercentenary Committee was the inability of the Lord Mayor to grant the use of the City Hall for the opening gathering, as had been arranged. It was unfortunate that the interesting programme of events had to be postponed, as it rarely happens that deferred functions of the kind prove fully successful. However, far more serious consequences were entailed than the abandonment of the Tercentenary Celebrations, and many of our readers must have passed through

a period of great anxiety, due to the thought of relatives or friends living within the area of revolt. Not a few of us wondered if our church in Stephen's Green, Dublin, suffered as a consequence of the fighting in its immediate vicinity. Fortunately, the only damage done was slight, and consisted of injuries caused to a stained glass window and a door by the passage of two rifle bullets. Nevertheless, the church was right in the danger zone, and the Sextoness, Miss Green, showed considerable courage in remaining on the premises all through the fighting. We can only hope that never again will such a dastardly stroke be struck by any section of the Irish people as was represented by the recent deplorable outbreak. It was surely enough to have the burden of a great war pressing upon our minds without the additional anxiety of insurrection at home. It is well that the authorities dealt with it so promptly and so vigorously. What is needed now is such a wise and far-seeing policy as shall make the recurrence of such an event for ever impossible.

* *

Many persons in the North of Ireland would read with deep sympathy the news of the death of Miss Matilda Sharpe, which took place on April 30th. She, like the other members of her family, was well known to all of the Unitarian faith, not only for her zealous advocacy thereof, but also for the very generous support she had given to it for so many years. Her life was rich in good works, and she will be greatly missed by many members of our religious community.

A UNITARIAN MESSAGE TO A WORLD AT WAR.

PREACHED BY REV. G. L. PHELPS IN FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BELFAST, ON SUNDAY, 2ND APRIL.

THE subject upon which I am announced to speak this evening is "The Unitarian Message to a World at War." I wish to make a very slight but significant correction—*A* instead of *The* Unitarian Message. I have no authority to speak for the denomination, neither am I the official spokesman of any Association. Another word by way of introduction—in speaking of a *Unitarian* message I have no thought of claiming a monopoly of wisdom or piety for our household of faith, but I do feel most strongly that we have a distinct and definite contribution to make to the religious thought and feeling of the present and the future.

First—as to the situation. We have, almost literally, a world at war. It is scarcely necessary to remind you that in extent and in horrors this is the greatest war of all time. The resources of civilization are being utilised for the purposes of death and destruction, instead of life and progress. We are in the presence of, I will not say *the*, but *a* failure of civilization. Further, in this terrible conflict nations and empires are arrayed against nations and empires, quite irrespective of religious professions. Roman Catholics, Protestants, orthodox and hetrodox, Christians and Mohammedans are in arms against their co-religionists. Religion has proved to be less effective as a bond of union than nationality. This, and the very fact we have drifted into war in spite of religion's advocacy or peace, is proof enough of *a* not *the* failure of religion, and especially the Christian religion.

"How wanes thine Empire, Prince of Peace!
With the fleet circling of the suns
The ancient gods their power increase.
Lo, how thine own anointed ones
Do pour upon the warring bands
The devil's blessing from their hands."

Then again, the experiences of these trying times are of a kind calculated to upset all shams and make-believe. The soldiers in the trenches and the sailors on the high seas are in daily company with death; they have to witness the agonies of the wounded, and have to endure discomforts and hardships and dangers as part of the common round; and we who remain at home, though we cannot compare our changed ways with theirs, are at least shaken out of our complacency; there

are far, far more saddened homes, there is widespread anxiety, there are urgent demands upon our generosity and sympathy, there is a steady increase in the cost of living, and a disinclination to indulge in games and amusements, hundreds of thousands are being drawn from their usual occupations to engage in some kind of war work, and, added to all this, there yet remains uncertainty as to the issues of the fight. The seriousness of life has been brought home to us in a manner we have never before experienced, and the conventionalities of religion are being tried in the balance and found wanting. In the early months of the war there were signs of a revival of religion; in the hour of trial people were turning to the Churches; but now, either because the heavy demands on our energies and our time leave fewer opportunities, or because something, perhaps the attitude of the Churches, has produced a lessened inclination, there are unmistakable evidences of declining Church attendance. This is the situation as I perceive it. "What shall we then say to these things?"

First—to speak in general terms—we Unitarians have great advantages and glorious opportunities in these days. Our advantages are these: we have been schooled in unpopularity; we should therefore find it particularly easy to rise above the temptation to prophesy smooth things, or to be influenced in the slightest degree by the praise of men. We have a splendid tradition for veracity in religion. We are under no compulsion to fit our convictions into the language of convention. We are not anchored to dogmatic statements of belief framed in ages with wholly different intellectual outlook. And the world at war has not outgrown religion: it has only outgrown many of the current expressions of religion. Here is our opportunity: we are not bound to the traditional vocabulary of religion. Men and women in these soul-searching times are longing to be free from the paralysing fear that life is a tale full of sound and fury signifying nothing; they want to be free from the feeling of hopelessness and helplessness which this world calamity induces, they want to be free from despondency and despair now that the brightest hopes and loveliest ideals they had cherished seem dashed to the ground; they want to be free from the overburdening consciousness of human frailty and sin which for ever damps their ardour and weakens their faith. "*The truth shall make you free.*" Do not be alarmed because your long-cherished system of theology or philosophy has broken down under the stress of new and intense experiences. "Our little systems have their day. They have their day, and cease to be," but God and religion are too great for any system. Do not think that faith is for ever lost because there have arisen grave doubts; doubt is not devil-born, it is often the road which leads from convention to conviction, from a creed accepted untested on authority to a living faith wrought out amid the clash and clang of suffering, sorrow, and strife. Do not turn to God with querulous murmurs and complaints that He has permitted such things to be, but bravely face whatever each day brings forth reverently, seeking to learn what these things can teach. Only thus can we approach nearer to the *truth concerning God*; these are *all* parts of His ways; we should never be satisfied with half truths or half Gods; we must not fear to see life steadily and see it whole. Orthodox Christianity has too often presented the thought of God to the modern mind as though He were distant in time and in space, dwelling in some far-off heaven and having uttered his last word to man nigh two thousand years ago; and the result has been that the thought of God has no part in our everyday life, or is too effeminate and mawkish to fit in with the hard facts of life. If you would really know your friend you must see him not only when he is dispensing hospitality, but when he is face to face with the serious business of life. So too with God. So gladsome and courageous an optimist as St. Paul looked life full in the face and said, "Behold therefore *the goodness and severity of God.*" The Israelites of old

saw in God the *Lord of hosts*. We too must see goodness and severity; we must recognise that God is Lord of hosts, not in order that we may find excuse for or justification of bloodshed, but that we may retain our faith in the ultimate wise and beneficent purposes of that over-ruling Providence which maketh even the wrath of man to praise Him. I am not so foolish as to believe that the Unitarian more than anyone else can fathom the fathomless mysteries of life and death, or can comprehend with perfect clearness the thoughts and ways of the High and Holy One who inhabiteth eternity, but I do confidently assert that the free and unfettered search for truth, for which we have always stood and frequently suffered, is the way out of darkness into light. The attitude of uncompromising veracity, rational piety, and reverend trust must inevitably turn us from fruitless complainings against God to an examination of the conduct of men. Then, perchance, we shall see, dimly at first may be, that the ills that oppress us have their source in human lust of power, jealousy, greed, hatred, envy, and malice, and habitual disregard of those revelations of the will of God which persist throughout all ages. Abraham Lincoln faced disaster in the right spirit, and we have only to slightly change his words to suit the circumstances of our time to get from his inaugural address the very sentiment we sorely need now—"Fondly do we hope—fervently do we pray—that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet if God wills that it continues until all the wealth piled by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said 3,000 years ago, so still it must be said, 'The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.' With malice towards none, with charity to all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations."

We cannot ignore the fact that there is a new kind of agnosticism prevalent; an increasing number of people are finding that the word God is losing its meaning for them; they observe that every nation engaged in the war calls on God, and those whose calculated frightfulness has shocked civilization quite seriously regard themselves as the instruments of God; they see that the right does not immediately conquer; they begin to doubt whether God has anything to do with it, or, if he has, they think he has made a sorry business of it. We must make it clear to these people that, however, the *word* God has been misused: that for which it stands is of supreme importance. What an absolutely hopeless business it would be to try to order our lives aright unless we were convinced that the nature of things is on the side of right.

> "This world's no blot for us,
> Nor blank; it means intensely and means good."

The intensity of its meaning is being demonstrated by the awful fact that to achieve it millions of lives are sacrificed and whole continents upturned. Before the war broke out many thoughtful people were alarmed at the tendencies which marked the age; high ideals had lost their power; commercialism, cruel, calculating, and cunning held the peoples of all lands in thrall; in the intervals of rest from money-making the craving for luxury and pleasure took the place of a love of nature and of art; the world was too much with us; late and soon getting and spending we laid waste our powers. May it not be that the purging and purifying process of a great calamity is the only way of bringing mankind back to plain living and high thinking? And God the All-terrible may be, nay *must be*, God the All-merciful and the All-wise. If only we can see and believe this, not only in war time shall we have a more assured trust and a more serene and serious temper, but we shall not have suffered in vain, and, come victory or

defeat, we shall have learned that man cannot live by business and pleasure alone, but by aspiration, hope, and love.

As with the thought of God, so with the thought of man, orthodox Christianity has been out of touch with modern thought. Religion has lost its hold on a great many people because it has been associated with a false and degrading theory of human nature. That man was made perfect, that on account of a trivial act of disobedience on the part of our first parents we have fallen into sin, that for this cause the vast majority are predestined to eternal torment, that the death of Jesus on the cross was the price paid to redeem some small portion of the race from the threatened doom—all this is strangely foreign to life in these days. It has ceased to influence our conduct. We must either throw aside the whole scheme of atonement or restate it in terms understandable to men and women of our day and in harmony with the facts of science. Man as yet is being made. When we trace human history back as far as we can, we come, not to the Garden of Eden and perfect innocence, but to the rude cave-dwellers. Slowly, with many a set back, man has advanced mentally, morally, and spiritually. The sins which still stain him are not the result of a fall, but lingering traces of his ascent. But, it may be argued, the spectacle of so-called civilised nations entrenched in far-flung battle lines, hurling death and destruction at each other, does not favour the view that progress is the law of life. Let us face the facts, but be sure that we have *all* the facts. The horrors of the present war surpass those of previous wars, not because those engaged in it are more brutal, but because they have at their command more efficient and deadly weapons. Even so, there was never better care taken of the wounded and the prisoners. The individual soldiers and sailors on both sides are not actuated by lust of blood; to the overwhelming majority of them it is all a grim and terrible and regrettable necessity. Then there is this significant fact to be taken into account—many a man at whom the Churches would look askance, who makes no profession of religion, who was not much in the habit of attending religious services, has shown himself possessed of noble qualities, has willingly laid down his life for his friend, has borne unspeakable discomforts and hardships uncomplainingly. We do not stop to ask whether these heroes are sound in the faith before awarding them our ungrudging praise. War brings out the best and the worst in human nature, and if we are bitterly disappointed to find that a nation whose industry and accomplishments we had admired can practise and applaud the grossest brutality, let us not forget to render thanks that the loftier spirit and the better way, though hidden from the wise and understanding, has been revealed unto so many whom we had underrated. And again, when in all the course of human history has there been so enormous an activity? self-forgetting, self-sacrificing charity. Money has been lavished, time and energy freely spent, to an extent never before known, to mitigate the sufferings and relieve the distresses of those whom the war has in any way injured. In these dark days we should think on these things, and be of better heart. Facing all the evil of these times, deploring the shattered ideals and dimmed hopes, can we not still see and believe that mankind tends upward, and that the folly and futility of the appeal to force will be brought home to us as never before by our present trial and tribulation? And dare we speak, even now, of the brotherhood of man? Yes, for this hideous nightmare has come upon us because we have stubbornly refused to acknowledge the glorious fact. It is as if God had spoken in terrible tones, telling us that such things must inevitably be unless we strive to live as brothers and substitute goodwill for suspicion and rivalry.

"Dreamers of dreams? we take the taunt with gladness,
Knowing that God, beyond the years we see,
Has wrought the dreams that count with you for madness
Into the substance of the world to be."

And what of Jesus? We are being told on every hand that his teaching is too ideal for life as it is, that to love our enemies is to give over the world to the bully and the unscrupulous. Here again orthodox Christianity is much to blame. The pure humanity of Jesus has been hidden from us by clouds of metaphysical subtilities, the purpose of his life has been misinterpreted in the interests of archaic dogmas, his teaching has been degraded to the level of an ethical code. But Jesus is slowly and surely coming to his own, for men are sharing his experience, and therefore by the bond of sympathy are coming to understand him.

"Is it not strange the darkest hour
That ever dawned on sinful earth
Should teach the mind with subtler pow'r
For comfort than an angel's mirth?
That to the Cross the mourner's eye should turn
Sooner than where the stars of Christmas burn?"

Though they may never use the language of the Churches, all who are passing through agony now are realising in a new and startling way the meaning of the Cross. We can only lose the fear of death, be nerved to do and to endure, to sorrow without despairing, to suffer without complaining, when, like Jesus, we can own even in the most hopeless situation a Higher Will, and deem that Higher Will not ours the best. He is for us the way of life, not because by some strange miracle he takes away our sins and their punishment; but because sharing our sufferings and temptations he was always about his Father's business, forgot himself in his love of his fellow, and was not turned aside from entire obedience to the best and truest by thought of ease or power or success. We cease to think of what he can do to save us, and begin to think how, like him, we can save others. His teaching becomes not a mere set of precepts, but a law of the spirit of life, and we realise that he has not failed, but we have never whole-heartedly tried to rule our lives by that spirit which was in him.

At a time when death is so busy reaping the harvest of war we are sorely in need of a more rational and convincing doctrine of immortality. That we are judged for eternity on the record of a few brief years here on earth, that either heaven or hell, as generally pictured, must be allotted us without hope of further opportunities of amending our ways, does not satisfy our moral standards. When some young fellow who has lived a thoughtless, aimless life, and who perhaps only from a love of adventure has gone out to the fighting line, meets his death while playing his part there, the inadequacy of much of the orthodox teaching about immortality is brought home to us. Is he eternally damned for his mis-spent life, or does his death wipe out all that has gone before? Had he only been wounded, he would have to take up his life just at the point reached; his short spell of discipline and duty would be added to the sum of his experiences, and all would go to the making of his future. Must we not believe that the same would be the case even though he passed through the portals of death? The continuity of the spirit's life is not broken by death. Not a heaven of stagnation, nor a hell of hopelessness, but a continuation of life under changed conditions, with ample room for growth, is the more rational view of immortality. Into the reasons for this hope time will not permit us now to go, but in a God-governed world the hope almost amounts to a certainty.

I have endeavoured to indicate some of the ways in which we can contribute to the upbuilding of a strong, rational, practical religion. In spite of the urgency of the claims made upon our time and thought by the military needs of the day, we cannot afford to neglect the affairs of the spirit. History should teach us that the most desperate situations demand the finest qualities of character, and have a way of bringing to light the loftiest revelations of God. Let us strive amid the stress and strain to keep an attentive ear for the whisperings of the Eternal, and may this be our constant prayer—

"From this dread sowing grant us harvest, Lord,
Of nobler doing and of loftier hope;
An all-embracing and enduring peace,

A bond of states, a pact of peoples, based
On no caprice of royal whim, but on
Foundations mightier than the mightiest throne--
The well-considered will of all the lands.
Therewith,—a simpler, purer, larger life,
Unhampered by the dread of war's alarms,
A life attuned to closer touch with Thee,
And golden-threaded with Thy charity ;—
A sweeter earth, a nearer Heaven, a world
As emulous in Peace as once in War,
And striving ever upward toward the Goal.
So, once again, through Death shall come new Life,
And out of Darkness, Light."

PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY.

By Ullin.

A young rising preacher had spent a Sunday wih an older and experienced minister in the North, sharing the day's work with him, the younger man preaching in the morning. Then came the time for the senior to give his helpful counsel. "Put more of the blood into it ; wait until you go South before you start that kind of preaching." "But I don't like the blood," was the reply. Soon after the young preacher found his great opportunity in one of the leading pulpits in London, and when the service was over, men, who were keen business men, who knew what it was they wanted, and believed in it, came forward one after the other to thank and to congratulate the young preacher. "This is just the sort of preaching we want—practical Christianity."

And herein is a parable: Two ministers, both within the bounds of orthodoxy, mutually respecting each other—the one belonging to the passing order, the other belonging to the new ; the one believing strongly in the "scheme of salvation," and therefore much involved in the theology concerning it, and earnest in his efforts to make clear to all "the way of salvation," the other keenly alive to the fact that whatever the meaning of the redemption purchased by Christ ; that whatever the mystery of Christ's own nature, and all that underlay the incidents recorded in His life, He Himself laid no great stress on any of these points, but was intensely practical in His preaching ; that what Christ preached as His gospel—the glad tidings—and what the Church as a whole had preached as His gospel were two very different things. Not that all these abstractions had not their own place ; but, the very things Christ Himself had preached most insistently had been to a great extent put on one side as "counsels of perfection," impossible to live up to, too great a strain for poor human nature ; and the things which Christ Himself said very little about—and what He did say, capable of different interpretations—that He had come down from heaven to make atonement for the sins of the world, and that men would be saved by accepting that atonement as made for them ; that the blood shed on Calvary would cleanse from all sins—these had been given prominence to. No doubt there are great mystical truths behind these forms of expression for those who have time and ability to fathom them. But, surely no one can maintain that it is the material blood that is meant. The blood stands for the life, and how can that life be applied to us but by taking His life into our life and making it ours.

Wherever it came from, or whatever the narrative of the Last Judgment may mean reading it critically, not a word in it is said about the beliefs of those who stand before the Judgment Throne ; but the lives only, and only the lives of brotherliness are those which enter into the joy of the Father.

Unitarians who read this will say there is nothing new in all this. We have said much the same all along, and we can show a record of good work done out of all proportion to our numbers. Sunday-schools really began with us ; ragged schools, domestic missions, and the pioneers in many a good work that is benefitting the world to-day were Unitarians. And here in Ireland it has been true in our Non-Subscribing Presbyterian congregations, as it has been over the water.

It would, however, be an error to say, as many do say : "It doesn't matter what a man believes so long as he does what is right." It matters a great deal for

himself and other people; in fact his "good life" surely has something to do with "belief." But, there are a whole lot of matters upon which a man might have a belief which have no bearing upon practical, every-day life, mere "academical opinions." However, it is not the "head" that rules entirely, or even to any great extent; the "heart" rules also; and a common expression is, "his heart is bigger than his head," and when a man is challenged to reconcile his conduct with his philosophy, he is sometimes hard put to to do so. Deny the soul, the future life, the existence of God. If death ends all, if the sum and substance of all toil and struggles is merely dust, why then toil, and struggle, and sacrifice, and bring upon oneself abuse and ostracism? why not be quiet, and let the world go on in its own foolish way, and an atheist like "Shoemaker Hankin," in Principal L. P. Jacks' "Mad Shepherds," may "spend his breath in proving that God doesn't exist, and his life is proving that He does." A "converted barrister," who had been an atheist, but gave his spare time to work as an evangelist, said that when he was a member of Mr. Bradlaugh's "Purity Wing of Secular Society," he never lived a better life, and that it was utterly false to say people became atheists that they might live loose lives. "Mr. Bradlaugh said: 'What Christians say is impossible, we say is possible,' and so they tried to practice the teachings of Christ." This statement was made from the pulpit of a church, before a large congregation gathered from all denominations.

In the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland there is a body of laymen, clear-headed, practical men of the world, who are under no glamour as to what the world actually is, and there have been indications in the last few years that these laymen recognise that the church does not consist of the ministry alone, and if the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church as a whole is to rise to the full height of its possibilities, it must find expression as a whole by its united voice in its representative assembly, and by concerted action in combating the evils which sap the life of the community. One of them has briefly stated his position on this matter.

I. "Orthodox people think their Churches are doing as well as it is possible to do in their combat with evil.

II. Many other people think that the Christian Churches are doing no good, and are chiefly maintained by the rich as a convenient means of managing and exploiting the poor.

III. A few think that the Churches are not doing as much as should be expected of them from the devotion, work, time and money expended by them, because they are working on a wrong method, and think that an improvement in method would show better results."

The last is his position. A practical man pins his attention on method. The weakness of all conferences, assemblies and synods is, that their proceedings too often end in talk. If every year the Synod undertook to deal in a practical way with only one social question, and to report on the results at the next Synod, surely point would be given to the proceedings, and our Church, small as it is, would be a force among other Churches for Practical Christianity.

QUESTIONS CONCERNING BELIEF AND CONDUCT.

I. Life and God.

Q. 1.—What is life?

A. 1.—Life is a power within of getting good from without. The good gained is the means of continued existence, and often of improved existence.

Q. 2.—Is there only one kind of life?

A. 2.—No. There is vegetable and there is animal life; also, there is spiritual life. The life is described as vegetable, animal, or spiritual, according to the kind of good that is gained, the kind of thing from which it is gained, and the manner in which it is gained. That from which the food is gained is called food or nourishment.

Q. 3.—How can the existence of a living thing become improved?

A. 3.—By increasing the power of life itself. Increase of size may increase the power of life. Or increase of special parts; for instance, the stem or leaves of plants, or limbs of animals. Or prolonged existence may result in a change whereby the living thing becomes better fitted to gain a greater good, or good from things not yielding good before.

Q. 4.—Why should we think existence is improved by an increased power of life?

A. 4.—Because the continuance of life is the natural desire of every living thing. Every animal is born with a desire to save itself from harm, hunger or thirst, or too much heat or cold, or any force or circumstance that is not good for life. Even plants, as well as animals, are endowed with a tendency to recover from the effects of injuries. So much pains are taken, and so much time is occupied in preserving and keeping life, that the very existence of the living thing is often called its life. Witty persons often speak of the life of a lifeless object, especially if it be one of great utility, which they use with care to make its existence last as long as possible.

Q. 5.—What can injure life or take it from us?

A. 5.—Life is injured, and will finally be taken from us by wounds or diseases of the body. Death, that is the loss of life, is sometimes said to be the result of old age. It is not really, however, old age, but the result of damage by disease, which becomes noticeable in old age, which causes death.

Q. 6.—Is there nothing else that affects life for good or ill besides health or disease?

A. 6.—In the case of human, and possibly of some other animated beings, life is affected by thought or feeling. For instance, some whose life had been in danger by reason of disease have been saved by hope or faith, or by tidings of joy; whilst others have been said to have died of grief. In reality, it is the state of the body which in such cases is first affected by the grief, or joy, or other feeling. Nevertheless, it is because the health of the body and the state of the life, affecting each other as they do, can both be thus affected by things that have no substance or no apparent reality except in thought, that human beings, at all events, would appear to have, besides the body with its animal life, an invisible part or spirit, having spiritual life.

Q. 7.—By what is spiritual life betokened as distinct from the animal life?

A. 7.—The presence of the spiritual as distinct from the animal life is betokened by all thoughts, including desires and purposes, expressed in speech and deed, which are concerned, not with the keep and comfort of the body, but with the relationship or dealings of the spirit with the world or universe in which it finds itself.

Q. 8.—What is the most important fact about the universe affecting the life of man?

A. 8.—The most important fact is, that it is ruled by the Eternal though invisible God.

Q. 9.—How do we know that fact?

A. 9.—We know the universe is ruled by God, because we see that all that happens in it happens in accordance with unfailing principles or laws.

Q. 10.—Why is the fact that the universe is ruled by God of much importance?

A. 10.—Because it follows thence that the will of God must be concerned with human conduct, so that the character of one's conduct, including thought and speech, must be of greatest consequence to oneself.

Q. 11.—Which is the greater or the better part of us, our body or our spirit?

A. 11.—The very fact of the importance of God's reality shows us that the spirit is the more important part, since it is only by the sensibility and intelligence of the spirit that we can discern the existence of the Ruler of the world. Yet the body is of much importance too, as the present abiding place, or the carriage of the spirit. This may be summed up in the famous dictum:

"The life is more than the food, and the body than the raiment."—(Lk. xii. 23).

The body and the spirit act upon each other; the state of the one has its influence upon the state of the other. But the spirit is by rights the ruler of the body, the body the subject of the spirit. The spiritual life, betokened by thought, knowledge, reasoning, reckoning, and so forth, has power to inform and regulate the animal life. Food for animal life is material, like the body itself. But spiritual food is knowledge of material and immaterial things, giving rise to thought, feeling, purpose; these giving rise to action. The principal food of the spirit is knowledge of the works and will of God; hence another memorable saying:

"Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word proceeding out of the mouth of God."—(Mt. iv. 4).

It is related of one who discovered that the will of God concerning himself was that he should perform a certain work—to fulfil a certain mission, which no one else could quite understand, that he said to his friends:

"I have meat to eat that ye know not. . . . My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work."—(Jn. iv. 32, 34).

Q. 12.—What is God?

A. 12.—God is a Spirit. By that we mean to say that He is a real being, whose existence, like that of the spirit of man, is not revealed or discovered by the same means as that of material things.

E. T.

MEMORIAL NOTICE.

MISS MATILDA SHARPE.

The many friends and former pupils of Channing House School must have been profoundly moved on hearing of the passing away last month of Miss Matilda Sharpe, co-founder with the late Rev. Robert Spears of the school at which so many of the daughters of our Unitarian families have received their education, and the inspiration which has sent so many of them out to do good work in the world—the world which needs that zeal for the good cause always one of the striking characteristics of her strong and active personality. Few enough are the souls housed in bodies as frail and almost insignificant looking as hers, which possess her passionate devotion to ideals, her more than willingness to deny herself, to live simply, dress almost at no cost, in order that she might give more and more of her substance in the cause she held dear. The girls, her pupils, must have of the best that she could give, and if necessary, must have it free of cost. if only the desire to learn was there, How she believed in the good, and how often she found it where others had seen only idleness, obstinacy, and frivolity! Her "but you are such a good girl, I am sure you do not really like to be silly, and to waste anything so precious as time," evoked a shamefaced but genuine effort to be what she expected you to be.

She had a wonderful knack of getting straight to the heart of a difficult problem, and showing the principle on which the solution must be based. Is it high-minded? Is it kind? These were the touchstones by which she tested actions. Her enthusiastic love of learning, especially of the classics and the great masters in art and literature, was an education in itself to the young minds around her, while her fund of humour and of quaint and witty sayings added to the attraction they felt towards her.

Channing House School is now thirty-one years old, and for the whole of that time it has been treated by its founder as only a loving and generous and devoted parent could treat a loving child. Many a home would to-day be saddened by her going were it not for the knowledge that her spirit lives on "in lives made better by her presence."

L. Talbot.

(In *The Inquirer*.)

The Ladies' Committee of the Domestic Mission desire to obtain accommodation in the country for convalescent and other cases during the summer months. Any of our people who could take in one or more persons for a short period should write to the Rev. F. Woolley, 10 Kinnaird Street,

[Advt.

BY THE WAY.

By the introduction of Daylight Saving we are working, in our own way, the old Joshua-miracle of making the sun and moon stand still. But this miracle is performed, not by our commanding the sun and moon, but by our adjusting ourselves to them. Nature thus scores a victory over convention. Our mechanical and (more or less) undeviating clocks ordered us to bed in the summer time, whilst the sun did its best to keep us up. Now, by putting on the clocks, we have admitted that the sun is right.

* *

It could not have been altogether a disadvantage to have lived before any sort of clock was invented, when, indeed, George Herbert's words would have been literally true :—

"The stars have us to bed;
Night draws the curtain; which the sun withdraws."

for along with clocks have come in appointments, public meetings, railway guides, fixed office and shop hours, and a host of like evils which, by tying us down to time, make us forget eternity.

* *

It is hardly to be expected that we shall be able to embark on this new departure without certain difficulties. Lord Balfour of Burleigh rather humourously instanced the following possible difficulty, when the measure was under discussion in the House of Lords. He said that, suppose on the night in October, when the clock was to be put back, some lady gave birth to twin children, "If one was born ten minutes before one o'clock, and the second child saw the light after the clock had been put back, the registration of the times of birth of these two children would be reversed, and the younger would be recorded as having been born fifty minutes before the first-born. Unless a remedy were found it might make great differences in regard to estates and property, and even titles might be affected."

* *

But I imagine most of us are willing to risk that difficulty, and also the bewilderment of our domesticated animals, who, never having used clocks, will wonder what on earth possessed all human beings to stay in bed an hour longer on the 21st May, and kept them waiting an hour for their food. Not only shall we have an extra hour of daylight for our gardening and our evening recreation, but we shall, it is calculated, save about £2,500,000 a year on gas and electric light. That will surely provide a bumper "Jack Johnson" towards Germany's defeat.

* *

I have recently paid a visit to England, and find that the War has had wide-reaching effects of which we know nothing here. Most of these effects are saddening and depressing, but not the introduction of bright and smart women tram-conductors, post-women, milk-women, etc., who make one feel more and more convinced that "Britons never, never shall be slaves," so long as we can produce men and women so mutually worthy of each other.

* *

Almost every available man in England is now in khaki, or has his armlet, which, no doubt, accounts for the fact that one old lady waking up and finding herself confronted by a burglar, could only gasp: "But why aren't you in khaki?" The burglar's answer is not recorded, but I trust it was not so densely unpatriotic as that of a young farm labourer depicted in "Punch." An old lady presented herself at the door of the shed wherein he was milking the cows, and sternly demanded: "Young man, why aren't you at the front?" to which the young man stolidly replied: "Because there's no milk at that end, ma'am."

* *

He was obviously not seeking for fame, which reminds me of an amusing misprint in a provincial paper. It occurred in a report of a poaching case, where it was stated that John this and Dick that were charged with "wandering about in search of FAME." They got it.

* *

The following story about one of our best-known ministers, recently deceased, has just reached me :—A short

time after his death a letter came for him, which when opened was found to contain a polite enquiry as to whether he found the heating apparatus satisfactory. I ought to say that shortly before his death a new heating apparatus had been installed in his church, otherwise my readers might think that the inquiry had some other reference.

VIATOR.

Reports.

Unity Guild.—Business meetings are not, as a rule, attractive to the ordinary members of a society, and that is, presumably, the reason for the small attendance at our Annual Meeting on the 19th April. No doubt there would have been a much larger audience had it been known that such an excellent paper was to be read by Miss I. Campbell, B.A., but with characteristic modesty she had insisted that it should not be advertised, and had not even allowed her name to appear on the winter syllabus card. The title of the paper, "The Unity Guild, 1906–1916," sufficiently declares its aim. It was an historic survey and an inquiry whether "the Guild has served any good purpose." The answer given was described as unduly pessimistic by one who took part in the discussion which followed the paper. The essayist recalled the many ways in which variety has been given to the meetings, as, "short holiday papers by members of the Guild, with and without slides; ladies' nights, impromptu speeches, anonymous papers, concerts, "visits to a dairy, a salt mine, a paper mill, a bakery," to say nothing of the "social evenings and lectures of various kinds on a variety of subjects" during the winter, and "a number of places the Guild has visited," purely for pleasure and to see our churches there, in summer. She poked fun at a subcommittee which took eight months to draw up the new rules, when the old ones, which served for eight years, were drafted in a fortnight, and hinted that this committee lacked "enthusiasm as well as business and organising power." This paper should have a stimulating effect on all who listened to it, and certainly the strong committee will have to exert itself, under the guidance of the new President, Mr. Hugh Erskine, to find new ways of keeping up the interest of the members; not that there is any sign of that interest flagging. It is quite the other way. The report shows that, with a membership of 115, there was an average attendance of 37 last summer, and 106 in the winter, each being a substantial increase on last year. It is also a matter for congratulation to find "the Guild has been instrumental in contributing £1 11s. 6d. to the Belfast Hospital for Sick Children; £5 to the French Wounded Emergency Fund; 10/6 to the Serbian Red Cross Society; £5 15s. 6d. to the Victoria Barracks Hospital Fund; £2 1s. 6d. to the Mission Poor's Purse; £5 to the Belgian Hospital Fund—£19 19s. in all." For the summer programme, which is now under consideration, the following dates have been fixed:—27th May, 10th June, 8th July, 9th September. Members and friends are particularly requested to keep these dates free from other engagements. The committee has been instructed to arrange, if possible, for visits to Crawfordsburn, Larne, Belvoir Park and Ardglass respectively on these dates.

* *

Ballycarry.—An interesting presentation took place on the evening of April 12th at the manse of the Old Presbyterian Church, Ballycarry. Rev W. G. Marsden, minister of the Old Presbyterian congregation, presided, and Mr. Alexander Ellis, choirmaster, the members of the choir, and other friends were present. Mr. Marsden opened the meeting by saying a few words explanatory of the gathering, and asked Mr. Ellis to make the presentation, which was to Mrs. Joseph Douglas, of Eden, on the occasion of her marriage, from the members of the Ballycarry congregation, as a small mark of their esteem and friendship. Mr. Ellis spoke of the long services of Mrs. Douglas as hon. organist of the church, and of her

regular attendance. The presentation, which was handed to her by Mr. Ellis on behalf of the congregation, together with a list of the subscribers, consisted of a very handsome silver tray and service, suitably inscribed, as an affectionate parting gift from Mrs. Douglas's many friends of the church. Mr. Douglas acknowledged the presentation on behalf of his wife in a pleasing little speech. Refreshments and music filled up the remainder of an enjoyable evening.

* *

Banbridge.—The annual Soiree in connection with the above Unitarian Church was held in the Dunbar Memorial Schools, on Wednesday evening, April 26th. There was a good attendance of members and friends of the congregation. A splendid tea was provided by the ladies, after which a successful concert was held. Rev. J. A. Davis, who presided, referring to the work of the past year, said:—We meet at the close of another year's work with the dark clouds of the great European War still hanging over us, and what is still worse, there is a more tragic war raging in our own country, which we hope will be swiftly ended. We have reason to be thankful that peace and quiet prevail in this part of Ireland. We remember, with gratitude, the brave men who are defending our Empire's honour and liberty on the battlefields of Europe, and especially the young men of our own Church here who have responded to the urgent call of their King and country. Let us hope and pray that we may soon have them back among us again, and that victory and an honourable peace be the result of their efforts and sacrifices. The past year has been a busy one for us all. The Literary and Sewing Guilds, which were inaugurated in September last, have had a very successful season. Three large parcels were forwarded by the Sewing Guild to the Belgian Hospital Fund, for which the Guild has received grateful acknowledgment. Interesting papers were read at the Literary Guild, and the discussions proved helpful. The appeal for special contributions to the church funds has met with a very satisfactory response, and the best thanks are due to all those who have so generously subscribed. A sum of £5 was collected and forwarded to the treasurer of the local fund for the provision of comforts for the soldiers of the Ulster Division on active service. The attendance at the Sunday services has been well maintained in spite of the severity of the winter we have just passed through. Our gratitude is due to the members of the choir for their faithful services during the year. In conclusion, Mr. Davis thanked them all for their continued kindness and loyalty to Mrs. Davis and himself. The programme consisted of the following items:—Glee, "Within the fold," the choir; song, Rev. M. Watkins, Belfast; Recitation, Mr. Stanley Bell; song, Mrs M'Cammon; glee, "Who'll o'er the Downs with me," the choir; duet, "In the dusk of the twilight," Mrs. M'Cammon and Rev. J. G. Davis; song, Mrs. M'Cammon; glee, "Oft in the stilly night," the choir; sketch, "The Head waiter," in which the following took part—Miss E. M'Keown, Miss Annie Shields, Miss Annie Shanks, Miss G. Watt, and Messrs. Stanley Bell, W. J. Radcliffe, Geo. Radcliffe, and S. Shields. This was the third sketch produced by this party of young people this winter, and great praise is due to them for their capable performance. On the motion of Mr. Geo. Wallace, a hearty vote of thanks was passed to all who had contributed to the pleasure and success of the evening. The proceedings were brought to a close by the singing of the National Anthem.

* *

Dunmurry.—A preliminary Sale of Work, in aid of the Dunmurry Work Guild for our Sailors and Soldiers, was held at The Glebe, by Mrs. Kelly, on the 18th April. The little effort realized over £20, and thanks are tendered to those friends who helped to make it a success.

* *

Rademon.—The nineteenth session of temperance work was brought to an end here by a meeting held on May 5th. In spite of very unfavourable weather there were fifty people present, and a

long programme of songs, recitations, and dialogues was much enjoyed. Eight meetings took place since last October, with an average attendance of about seventy. The social at the New Year brought together a packed audience of 150 people of different denominations. The Preparation Class in connection with the Total Abstinence Society met every Monday evening throughout the winter, and was regularly attended by thirteen or fourteen boys and girls, who did a large amount of work. At all the meetings a special effort was made to induce the taking of pledges for the duration of the war. Resolutions in favour of the total prohibition of the manufacture and sale of alcohol for the same period were carried, and forwarded to the leading members of the Government, and their receipt acknowledged. The Society is much indebted to the following gentlemen who very kindly attended, and gave addresses at one or more of the meetings:—Mr. Atkinson, of the Irish Temperance League; Rev. W. H. Townley Tilson, M.A.; Rev. G. L. Phelps, and Rev. T. Jamison, M.A.

As other congregations have been publishing the help given by their members to war funds, perhaps it will not be considered out of place if a short account be inserted of the efforts made by this small worshipping society in the same direction. Since the beginning of the great struggle a sum close on £60 has been raised for the purpose of alleviating the sufferings of the victims. After deducting expenses, the amount was allocated as follows:—Prince of Wales' National Relief Fund, £19 5s.; Belgian Relief Fund, £1 11s.; Unitarian Motor Ambulance Fund, £15; St. John Ambulance Association and British Red Cross Society, £5 5s.; Serbian Relief Fund, £15 14s.

* *

Holywood.—The Annual Sunday School Prize Distribution took place on Sunday, May 7th. The prizes were distributed by Mrs. Irvine, and, in spite of most unfavourable weather on the preceding days, the scholars brought a big and beautiful supply of flowers, which were afterwards sent to the Belfast Hospital for Sick Children. The collection, which was this year sent to the Belgian Hut Fund, amounted to £1.

The Rev. G. L. Phelps has been granted leave of absence for three months in order to take up work in connection with the Y.M.C.A. huts in France, and will be away during July, August, and September.

Echoes.

A letter sent to his mother by a young artilleryman who arrived in Flanders in time to take part in the battle of Loos contains some very striking passages. After describing how after reaching the scene of action his battery had only just time to rush up some sandbag and earthwork protection before the enemy began pouring heavy fire upon them, he says:—"Then I was setting fuses all the time, and it seemed as if I could not keep the gun busy enough. The shells whizzed and whined, but we only kept at work, and the infantry afterwards told us that they had never been better supported. I hvae had hardly any sleep for a week, but I am thankful to say we get plenty to eat." "And now," he says, in a remarkable conclusion, "let me tell you what keeps us going. It is prayer. I believe more prayers go up from the guns than from all the Churches in England. Don't give me a sermon in a letter, dear. We don't need any here. It's all round us. Every prayer is from the heart, and I fully believe after these days that God is with us." * *

"Be not deceived, there is no wall of adamant, no triple flaming sword, to drive off those lawless assassins that have murdered and pillaged in every other land; Heaven has made with us no covenant, that there should be joy, and peace here, and wailing, and lamentation in the world besides; I would counsel you to put on a mind of patient suffering, and noble acting; whatever energies there are in the human mind, you will want them all; every man will be tried to the very springs of his heart, and those times are

at hand which will show us all as we really are, with the genuine stamp, and value, be it much, or be it little, which nature has impressed upon each living soul."—SYDNEY SMITH.

* *

"Let an Englishman or a Frenchman, who respectively represent the two greatest nationalities of modern Europe, sincerely ask himself what it is that makes him take pride in his nationality, what it is which would make it intolerable to his feelings to pass, or to see any part of his country pass, under foreign dominion. He will find that it is the sense of self-esteem generated by knowing the figure which his nation makes in history; by considering the achievements of his nation in war, government, arts, literature, or industry. It is the sense that his people, which has done such great things, merits to exist in freedom and dignity, and to enjoy the luxury of self-respect."—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

DEATH.

O'NEIL —At Ballyhemlin, on May 9th. 1916, Mrs. O'Neil. Interred at Ballyhalbert.

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